

I-84 DANBURY PROJECT
Danbury, CT

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

SUBMITTED TO:
CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



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NOVEMBER 2016

REVISED: FEBRUARY 19, 2018

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This Public Involvement Plan (PIP) describes the objectives, methods, schedule and expectations for public engagement on the I-84 Danbury Project. It is intended to be a living document, revisited periodically to incorporate changes in approach to be responsive to stakeholders' needs. The purpose of this public involvement effort is to lay the framework to consult and collaborate with diverse project stakeholders and the public to:

- identify deficiencies and needs;
- establish the project's purpose and need;
- identify, develop and evaluate alternative solutions;
- reach consensus for improvements in the corridor and select and design the preferred alternative;
- review environmental documents pertaining to NEPA and CEPA compliance -- i.e. a federal-level Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Environmental Assessment (EA) and state-level Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) – and assist the project team in identifying potential impacts and alternative mitigation measures; and,
- design and construct the chosen plan.

This consultation and collaboration will require significant public and stakeholder input throughout the planning and alternatives analysis, environmental documentation, and design and construction phases. To manage this process, coordinate public outreach activities and implement the project, CTDOT has selected various consultants and organized them under one team. In this PIP, CTDOT and its consultant team are referred to collectively as the project team.

A robust public and stakeholder outreach program, guided by this PIP, will utilize a wide range of strategies or techniques to engage residents, businesses, commuters throughout greater Danbury. Public input will be crucial in ensuring that the project not only addresses I-84's deficiencies and needs in a practical and cost-effective manner but also considers local and regional context and community concerns, goals and priorities related to land use, intermodal or multimodal travel, environmental protection, economic development, community cohesion and connectivity and social equity.

This PIP describes how the project team will reach out to inform and seek input from stakeholders, the traveling public, and affected communities throughout the project via newsletters, public meetings, e-bulletins, a project website, social media and other forms of outreach, as appropriate. Many methods will be used to let people know what is happening throughout the project, and there will be numerous opportunities for discussion and comment. Public opinion and comments will be well-documented and will be duly considered throughout project planning, design and construction.

1.2 Guiding Principles

The Goals and Objectives of the Public Involvement effort for the I-84 Danbury Project reflects CTDOT's overarching goals to be accessible, inclusive, collaborative, responsive, informative, timely and transparent to the public in the provision of transportation services and in the planning and prioritization of major transportation projects. CTDOT highly values public involvement and views it as a foundation for improving the process and outcomes of this important project; it therefore chooses to invest the time and resources to create a PIP that does not simply fulfill the federal and state requirements, but exceeds those requirements and expectations.

Goals of the project's public involvement are to:

- Lower barriers to public participation in the transportation decision-making process and encourage more people and more diverse voices to review and comment on transportation investment priorities; particularly groups traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as pedestrians, bicyclists, seniors, and the disabled; and low-income, minority, immigrant, ethnic and tribal communities.
- Establish ongoing, inclusive, meaningful, and responsive two-way communication with stakeholders, agencies, and the public.
- Engage with a significant number of stakeholders and a broad, representative cross-section of the public in an efficient manner.
- Ask residents, businesses, relevant organizations, and officials of the Danbury region to provide useful information that can inform the project.
- Develop practicable and strategic recommendations built upon a solid base of public support.

Objectives of the project's public involvement include:

- When appropriate or requested under established CTDOT procedures, public notices and meetings will also be provided in other language(s) to accommodate audiences or stakeholders who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English (i.e. limited English proficient or LEP populations).
- Adequate time will be provided for public notification of public involvement activities and for the review and comment of project information at key decision points.
- When appropriate, visualization techniques will be employed to better enable citizens to understand alternative plans and the context of proposed improvements and graphic illustrations will be used to clarify or replace technical language.
- Public events will be scheduled at convenient, accessible locations.
- Informational material will be made available in a timely manner, through a variety of electronic and in-person outlets.
- The public involvement process for this project will be reviewed periodically for effectiveness in engaging the public, particularly groups traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems.

1.3 Commonly Used Acronyms

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act

CEPA: Connecticut Environmental Policy Act

CFR: Code of Federal Regulations

CTDOT: Connecticut Department of Transportation

CSS: Context Sensitive Solutions

DEEP: Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

EA: Environmental Assessment

EIE: Environmental Impact Evaluation

EIS: Environmental Impact Statement

EJ: Environmental Justice

EPA: United States Environmental Protection Agency

FAST Act: Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act

FHWA: Federal Highway Administration

FOI: Freedom of Information

FRA: Federal Rail Administration

FTA: Federal Transit Administration

HAR: Highway Advisory Radio

LEP: Limited English Proficiency

LRP: Long-Range Transportation Plan

MPO: Metropolitan Planning Organization

NEPA: National Environmental Policy Act

NOI: Notice of Intent

OPM: Connecticut Office of Policy and Management

PIP: Public Involvement Plan

PS&E: Plans, Specifications and Estimates

ROW: Right of Way

RPO: Regional Planning Organization

SAFETEA-LU: Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users

SHPO: State Historic Preservation Office

STIP: Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

TDM: Transportation Demand Management

TIP: Transportation Improvement Program

TMP: Transportation Management Plan

TSM: Transportation Systems Management

USDOT: United States Department of Transportation

WestCOG: Western Connecticut Council of Governments

1.4 Compliance

Public projects such as the I-84 Danbury Project are subject to many regulatory requirements. Several federal and state statutes or guidance documents call for certain outreach and coordination measures to be taken to ensure that adequate public and regulatory agency input is incorporated into the project. While CTDOT seeks to exceed these regulatory directives with a comprehensive and inclusive outreach strategy, it is important that the project team understand and comply with the regulations that exist. The following federal regulations are perhaps the most relevant:

- The *National Environmental Policy Act of 1969* (NEPA), as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.)
- The *Connecticut Environmental Policy Act* (CEPA), Sections 22a-1 through 22a-1h of the Connecticut General Statutes establish an environmental policy for Connecticut and a process for evaluating the environmental impacts of State agency actions. The process is further defined by Sec. 22a-la-1 through 22a-la-12 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies.
- Statewide and Metropolitan Planning. 23 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Parts 450 and 500 and 49 CFR Part 613, February 14, 2007
- Environmental Impact and Related Procedures and Section 4(f). 23 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Parts 771 and 774; October 16, 2001; 40 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) 1506.6 and *Freedom of Information Act* (5 U.S.C. 552)
- Protection of Historic Properties. 36 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Part 800.
- Air Quality Conformity. 40 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Part 51, November 24, 1993
- Management and Monitoring Systems. 23 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) 500, December 1, 1993
- *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*
- *Environmental Justice Executive Order 12898*
- *FHWA Work Zone Safety and Mobility Rule* 23 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) 630 subpart J

The federal regulations listed above require:

- Early and continuing public involvement opportunities during all stages of the planning and programming process.
- Timely information about transportation issues and processes to the community affected by transportation plans, programs and projects.
- Reasonable public access to information used in the development of the plans and projects.
- Adequate public notice of public involvement activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points.
- A process for demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input.
- A process for seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households.
- Periodic review of the effectiveness of the public involvement process.

To provide guidance on CTDOT's approach to public outreach, CTDOT published the following manuals or guidance documents:

- *Connecticut Department of Transportation: Public Involvement Procedures August, 2017.*
www.ct.gov/dot/pip
- *Connecticut Department of Transportation Public Involvement Guidance Manual, Revision of 2009.*
http://www.ct.gov/dot/lib/dot/documents/dpolicy/pigm_final_11_16_09.pdf

1.5 Identification of Stakeholders and Public Groups

The project team will work to identify stakeholders that should be directly engaged by the Public Outreach process. For purposes of this plan, a stakeholder is defined as a person or group involved in or affected by this transportation project, an entity that has the potential to influence people’s opinions or decisions relative to transportation investments, or simply parties or members of the public that have expressed interest in the project.

Examples of stakeholders include federal, state, regional and local officials, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), CTDOT partners or sister agencies, business, commerce or economic development organizations, transit operators, freight companies, shippers, transportation, transit or commuter advocates, bicycle advocacy groups, environmental organizations, public interest groups, institutions of higher learning, and community-based groups or social service agencies that advocate for limited English proficient populations, the disability community, and minorities, immigrant and ethnic groups.

In accordance with the requirements of Title VI, the project team will identify the population and composition of the individuals impacted by the I-84 Danbury Project. CTDOT Title VI maps will be reviewed to determine if there are low income, minority, or Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations in the I-84 Danbury Project area. Additionally, the project team will research and identify community based organizations, faith based organizations, and community leaders within the I-84 Danbury Project area.

Throughout the project duration, the project team will create and maintain a list of stakeholders (organizations and individuals) that includes their email addresses. These stakeholders will receive regular project updates and notifications of meetings electronically through email and via the project’s website. Ongoing maintenance of the list will include the addition of individuals and organizations that request to be added and/or attend public meetings, as well as making any requested changes to contact information. The project team will also conduct interviews with select stakeholders as further described in Section 2.1.3.

The following table is a snapshot of public outreach efforts or activities that CTDOT plans to execute to fulfill the public outreach objectives of the I-84 Danbury Project. In recognition that, to be effective, public outreach activities need to be customized for each major category of stakeholder, this table correlates five general categories of stakeholders -- including: 1) the general public; 2) community-based organizations and special interest groups; 3) elected officials; 4) focus groups; and 5) the media – with alternative live engagement techniques and communication tools.

Table Correlating Major Categories of Stakeholders with Public Involvement and Outreach Strategies

	<i>Principal Objective</i>	<i>Live Engagement</i>	<i>Communication Tools</i>
The General Public	Inform Consult Collaborate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal, Pop-Up type Meetings • Public Informational Meetings or Workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Website • Social Media • Brochures, Newsletters and Fact Sheets • Press Advisories • E-Bulletins • Comment Cards provided at Informational Meetings
Environmental Justice Communities, Community Based Organizations, and Special Interest Groups	Inform Consult Collaborate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal, Pop-Up type Meetings • Stakeholder Interviews or small group meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Website • Social Media • Brochures, Newsletters and Fact Sheets • Press Advisories • E-Bulletins
Elected Officials	Inform Consult Collaborate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal Public Official Briefings and Listening Sessions • Invite CEOs and Legislators to Informal Public Events (Pop-Ups), and Public Informational Meetings or Workshops • Project Advisory Committee Meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brochures, Newsletters and Fact Sheets • E-Bulletins
Focus Groups	Consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Group Meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brochures, Newsletters and Fact Sheets • E-Bulletins
The Media	Inform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key media outlets in greater Danbury and contact them to determine how they can help disseminate timely information about the project to the public. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Website • Brochures, Newsletters and Fact Sheets • Press Advisories • E-Bulletins

2.0 PUBLIC OUTREACH EVENTS AND ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

A wide range of techniques – public outreach events and engagement tools -- will be utilized as part of the public involvement effort for this project. Following is a description of each technique along with information about how they will be used and the desired outcomes. These techniques are generally grouped into four categories: 1) Live Meetings; 2) Electronic Media; 3) Information Distribution Techniques; and, 4) Responding to public comments. These are discussed in the following sections:

2.1 Live Meetings

Online and electronic outreach cannot supplant traditional face-to-face outreach but rather complements the process to provide as inclusive an engagement process as possible. In-person meetings are an important way to engage with citizens and offer opportunities to communicate and receive input.

When scheduling a public engagement activity, the project team will consider scheduling multiple meetings at various locations and times, if doing so will increase meaningful access and participation. Every effort will be made to locate meeting locations near public transportation options and all public engagement activities will be held at venues that are ADA accessible. Once the project team has determined the date, time, and location of the public meeting, the CTDOT Office of Communications will be notified so the event can be added to CTDOT’s Calendar of Events and posted on the CTDOT website, in addition to the I-84 Danbury Project website.

2.1.1 Project Advisory Committee Meetings

The Project Advisory Committee (PAC) will be comprised of representatives from a range of stakeholders. The PAC is expected to meet twice during each of four phases of the project leading to and including Preliminary Design. The four project phases include: 1) Project Initiation, Scoping, and Purpose and Need Phase; 2) Identification and Development of Alternatives; 3) Establishment of Evaluation Criteria and Assessment of Alternatives; and 4) Selection of Preferred Alternative. The development of NEPA/CEPA environmental documentation (EA, Draft EIS) and the preliminary design of the preferred alternative is expected to occur in later phases of the project.

The purpose of the PAC meetings is to ensure that specialized interests and local experts are provided an opportunity to share key knowledge of specific transportation issues and opportunities. The desired outcome of these meetings is the incorporation of specialized knowledge in the final plan and to garner the support of transportation stakeholders representing a wide variety of interests.

The PAC will be important for building a base of support among their constituents for the Preferred Alternative. Project Advisory Committee members will be requested to share information and gather input and comments on the project from their constituencies. Project Advisory Committee members will be selected by CTDOT, with assistance by the project team.

2.1.2 Focus Groups

Two sets of three focus groups will be held in the I-84 corridor to identify issues and concerns of the public. The desired outcome of Focus Group meetings is to: 1) collect informed opinions on this major capital investment and the project’s purpose and need; 2) shed light on persistent challenges or problems in the I-84 corridor; 3) gauge public reaction to potential alternatives; and, 4) better understand the needs and concerns of a particular group of people.

Individuals will be targeted who regularly use the I-84 transportation corridor but are not already engaged in public dialogue on transportation issues, and are not affiliated with organizations involved in planning. Outreach will be made to people from all walks of life – e.g. professional office worker, car mechanic, hair stylist, public safety officer – to participate in the focus groups. Focus groups should have enough participants to provide a diverse set of viewpoints but still be small enough that the conversation feels accessible to all participants; therefore, each focus group will be comprised of 10-12 individuals, one facilitator and one recorder.

The first series of three focus groups will meet within three months of project initiation. The purpose will be to gauge participant agreement with the project’s purpose and need and their general expectations about project development.

Each session will be divided into three segments. First, the facilitator will provide focus group attendees with an educational or informative presentation to inspire discussion; the facilitator will then lead discussion to explore attitudes that focus group participants have about congestion in the corridor and how congestion affects their daily lives. This will be followed up by the facilitator eliciting opinions from participants about alternative investments in the corridor or alternative solutions.

The second series of three focus groups will meet after the project team, in close association with the public, has developed alternatives for the project, but prior to the screening or assessment of the alternatives. The principal objective of this series of meetings is to discuss various criteria, performance measures, indicators or metrics by which the alternatives might be evaluated. The expectation is that individuals representing different special interests or from different walks of life will have very different ideas about what criteria is most important to use as a yardstick. This information will help the project team identify a methodology through which the alternatives should be assessed as well as seed subsequent discussions with the public on the topic of screening of the alternatives.

A report of the focus groups will be written and made available to the public.

2.1.3 Stakeholder Interviews

The purpose of the Stakeholder interviews is to gather input and build support from key stakeholders who may be unable or unwilling to attend or speak freely in the Advisory Committee setting. The desired outcome of these interviews is the receipt of detailed information not easily gathered in other settings.

Interviews with a range of stakeholders will be conducted by the project team to anticipate “hot button” issues and to elicit concerns from special interest groups who may be most affected by the project. One-on-one or small group meetings with interest groups such as truck, rail and bus transit industry representatives; commuter advocacy groups; economic development interest groups; and environmental and social justice groups will identify how the project benefits the long-term goals of such interest groups.

The agenda for discussion may include:

- The impact that a “No-Build” solution may have on the constituents of each stakeholder group; i.e. to what degree is the status quo relative to mobility, accessibility, commerce, environmental impact, social equity and sustainability an acceptable path?
- The stakeholders’ viewpoint and concerns regarding possible positive and negative impacts associated with the interests specific to each stakeholder group.

- Identification of ways to optimize the potential benefits and mitigate potential negative impacts.

2.1.4 Informal Public Outreach or “Pop-Up Meetings”

The project team will conduct Pop-ups Meetings at various public venues. Pop-ups are a way of reaching people who do not typically come to meetings and might not otherwise hear about the project through tools like newspaper notices or web announcements on the project website.

Pop-Up meetings aim to increase public participation by “meeting people where they are” rather than expecting members of the public to come to us. It is important to hold meetings during weekend and evening hours and to provide translation services to increase meeting accessibility. Pop-Up meetings could be staged at local festivals, farmers’ markets, highway service plazas, shopping mall concourses and regularly planned events to conduct outreach with the public.

The desired outcome of Pop-Up meetings is to yield increased public participation from many of the “difficult-to-reach” populations including disadvantaged populations that may not have immediate access to computers, low-income communities, women, the aging, and the young.

2.1.5 Public Informational Meetings or Workshops

The format of the Public Informational Meetings will include a blend of formal, sit-down presentations with live speakers, informal Q&A sessions, small group break-out sessions, and unstructured, open-house style exhibit areas where attendees can roam and view exhibits at their own pace and ask questions of meeting facilitators in a one-on-one chat. The desired outcome of informal Public Informational Meetings and open house style workshops is that interested citizens, stakeholders and the media can learn more about the project in a casual and comfortable environment and feel free to ask candid questions, express concerns or comments, and offer ideas.

Meeting rooms will be ADA accessible with integrated seating available for those who use wheelchairs or power assistive devices where practical. Reserved seating will be made available up front for deaf or hearing impaired so that they may see the interpreter, closed captions, or be able to lip read.

Individuals requiring materials in alternative formats and translated materials must request them prior to the event. Large print versions or electronic versions of all printed materials will be made available at all public meetings upon advance request (font size 16 pt. with the highest contrast – Black/White.) These materials will include the same information as the original handouts.

Foreign language and audible versions of materials will also be made available when requested prior to the meeting. All reasonable format requests will be honored. If the request is made at the meeting or after the meeting, every attempt will be made to provide the materials within seven days of the request. Attendees making the requests will not be charged for any cost affiliated with the creation of alternate formats of meeting materials.

When sign language interpreters are present during a meeting, their presence and function will be announced at the opening of the meeting. The location of accessible restrooms and areas of refuge (for safety) should be announced at the opening of the meeting. All videos and DVDs shown should be closed captioned.

Prior to a Public Informational Meeting or Workshop and Formal Public Hearings, the project will make any timely requested language assistance services or accessibility accommodation arrangements. The following Title VI considerations will be addressed during set-up and during the public meeting based on requested or identified language needs:

- Posting of signage in other languages
- Space reserved for language interpreters clearly visible to the entire audience
- Provide Title VI materials at the welcome desk
 - I Speak Cards
 - Translated versions of written materials (i.e. fact sheets, comment cards, etc.)
 - ADA Compliant documents (i.e. braille, large font, etc.)
 - Title VI Notice to Beneficiaries (in English and any identified LEP languages)

Given the often technical and complex language of transportation planning and engineering, the project team will take care to communicate such complex information in a clear and simple manner to members of the public who have widely varying backgrounds, including varied education levels. Any public hearing or informational meeting with a formal presentation will begin with a general statement regarding non-discrimination, and the services available to assist with preparing written comments and/or for completing forms such as demographic surveys.

2.1.6 Formal Public Hearings

Formal public hearings will be held in accordance with state and federal regulations at required project milestones, including:

- The start of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA) process (Public Scoping Meeting)
- The release of the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) and/or Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) for public review
- The release of the final Environmental Assessment (EA) and/or Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) for public review

At a public hearing, the project team and CTDOT will receive and record verbal comments delivered in front of those in attendance. Although public hearings are generally conducted to receive public comments, the project team and CTDOT may choose to respond to questions received during the hearing. The project team and CTDOT will also be prepared to receive written comments that are hand-delivered at the public hearing, mailed to CTDOT, or submitted electronically to the project team or CTDOT.

During either a public hearing or other form of public forum where there is a formal question and answer session and the public speaks one at a time, the project team and CTDOT will document the questions and responses. If an immediate answer cannot be provided, the project team or CTDOT may respond to the public separately or as part of a future public forum.

2.1.7 Public Official Briefings

The purpose of the Public Official Briefings is to inform chief elected officials (CEOs) and other decision makers about the project progress and to provide a forum for input before key decisions are finalized. These sessions will enable the project team to better understand issues and opportunities, coordinate on-going projects among different governmental levels, and provide introductions with key staff or others involved in the provision of transportation or development. The sessions will also inform CEOs and other officials about upcoming public events or report releases to allow them to alert their constituents to the availability of new information or to the schedule of public events.

The desired outcome of Public Official Briefings is to improve intergovernmental lines of communication and work more collaboratively on the identification and assessment of alternatives and the development of the preferred plan – a plan that considers local context, needs, goals and priorities, that is composed of practicable recommendations and integrated solutions, and that enjoys the support and buy-in of key policy-makers and their constituents.

2.2 Electronic Media

Electronic media will be employed as a cost-effective means of casting a broad net and conducting outreach with a large, diverse audience. The desired outcome of the electronic media outreach component is meaningful participation of stakeholders representing diverse ages, ethnic and racial backgrounds, income levels, and other characteristics.

2.2.1 Project Website - i84danbury.com

A website dedicated to the project will be created to provide information about the project and to host project documents. The site will remain the primary portal for the public and will include PowerPoint presentations, fact sheets, concept plans, maps and other information developed over the course of the project. The website will also be a repository for all information presented at PAC and public meetings as well as summaries of those meetings.

The website content will include these subsections:

- **Home Page (Welcome)** – This page will provide a project overview and feature tabs or icons to enable easy navigation within the website.
- **About** – This page will introduce website visitors to the project and will include project goals and objectives, information about the Alternatives Analysis process, draft and final Purpose and Need Statement, project timeline, frequently asked questions (FAQs), and details on the project team.
- **Get Involved** – Information posted in this section will include the Public Involvement Plan, information about the Project Advisory Committee, announcements of upcoming public outreach events, summaries of past public meetings, and a “Join Our Mailing List” submission form.
- **Library** – As the project progresses, this section will include information on the project’s history, public meeting materials, press releases, newsletters, fact sheets, and other general project documents (plans, reports, technical memos, etc.)
- **Contact Us** – an electronic comment form for the public to submit questions and share views with the project team. This electronic form will submit the comment or question to a project email address. A

log of all comments will be kept and shared with the project team. Questions and comments will be aggregated by general topic and the project team will provide responses for each general topic or thread.

The website content will present a balanced view of the project so that it is informative, objective and viewed as a source of accurate information. It will be updated monthly with news or postings of project progress, reports, meeting announcements, etc.

2.2.2 Social Media

In addition to the project website, online public outreach will also employ the use of social media – possibly including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube – to better notify the public of opportunities to attend live meetings and other public events, to steer online traffic to new postings on the project website and to provide interesting platforms to disseminate alternative project content (e.g. videos, photos and webinars). Social Media engagement will be conducted to varying degrees throughout the project. As the project proceeds, updates and information will be distributed through various social media channels to increase attendance at project public outreach events.

Social media can also function as an online forum for general feedback and for the exchange of ideas. They can provide an unstructured, accessible method for people to express concerns about the project or to brainstorm possible solutions. They can also provide value in alerting CTDOT to any project misconceptions or festering issues that should be addressed.

The management and oversight of all social media outlets will comply with the State of Connecticut’s Social Media Policy as outlined by the Office of Policy and Management.

<http://www.ct.gov/opm/cwp/view.asp?a=3006&q=561700>

2.3 Information Distribution Techniques

The primary purpose of the following techniques or tools is to distribute information to the public in print and electronic or digital formats in a timely and efficient manner. These techniques will also serve to prompt interested citizens and groups to provide contact information (emails) so that they can receive regular updates about the project and to solicit comments from individuals and groups that may not be able to attend live meetings or other public outreach events. The variety of tools to be employed for these purposes better enables CTDOT to reach out to a diverse cross-section of the public including stakeholders traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems.

All public notices will advertise the availability of free language assistance and the availability of reasonable accommodations. The notice will include the contact information and procedures for requesting the services, including the deadline for requesting the services.

Additionally, all public notices will provide instruction for those who are hearing impaired to call the 711 Telecommunications Relay Service in order to request accommodations.

The public notice will be published with sufficient processing time for free language and accessibility accommodation requests. The project team will develop translated versions of the public notice, press release, or other related announcements, based on the identified LEP populations. The project team will identify non-English media (print, TV, radio, website, etc.) through which to publish the notice to the public. Additionally, the public notice will be provided to individuals, organizations, and other

stakeholders that represent Title VI and EJ populations in the affected area. They will be provided with a copy of the public notice, in English and any translated versions, to share with their constituents, members, or clients. Options for distribution will include email, postal mail, telephone, and in-person distribution by members of the project team.

2.3.1 Brochures or Newsletters

Throughout the project, the project team will generate engaging brochures, newsletters or fact sheets with project-related content. These documents will be brief and concise and will include text and infographics to convey information on key transportation-related topics such as freight, transit, land use sustainability, economy, and technology. For example, subject content might include:

- A description of the existing travel characteristics of I-84 (e.g. traffic volumes, congestion levels, percent through traffic, percent truck traffic, etc.).
- An explanation of the value of Travel Demand Management (TDM) and how TDM could be improved to better serve commuters and employers in greater Danbury and to better connect the various modes of travel.
- What is Transportation System Management (TSM) and how is the technology of TSM changing? Could TSM be employed to help solve some of the thornier problems that lead to congestion (e.g. better notification of highway incidents).
- A description of alternatives under consideration and the criteria through which they will be assessed.

The intent of these tools is to better inform the public about emerging or innovative transportation-related systems, principles, or strategies, as well as to highlight some of the key issues, challenges and findings associated with the study of alternatives for I-84 and with the potential positive and negative impacts of each alternative.

Printed versions of these brochures, newsletters or fact sheets will be distributed at public meetings, at local libraries and other community facilities; digital versions will also be posted to the project website and linked to social media.

2.3.2 Press Advisories

Engagement with the press and media outlets will occur at strategic points throughout the project. Press Advisories or Press Releases will be prepared at these points to update the public on project progress and notify the public and stakeholders about the availability of information or plans. Press Advisories or public notices will also be prepared and distributed to media outlets in advance of key public information meetings or public hearings about the project to notify the public about the date, time, place of the meetings and the subject to be discussed.

2.3.3 E-bulletins

In addition to regularly issued newsletters or fact sheets, the project team will prepare and electronically distribute e-bulletins over the course of the project to the individuals and groups on the project's stakeholder email list. The communications will include project updates, notifications of public meetings

and events, links to project news articles, notification of project website updates, and announcements about new editions of project newsletters. E-bulletins will be issued jointly in both English and Spanish.

2.4 Responding to Public Comments

2.4.1 Comment Database

All comments submitted by the public via the website and social media pages, as well as via mail and fax, will be reported to the project team. The project team will create a database to collect, manage and report on comments. Questions and comments will be aggregated by topic or theme and the project team will regularly report to the public (via the project website) what the team is hearing from the public and how CTDOT is addressing those questions and comments.

2.4.2 Response to Comments

Every person who sends a question or comment to the project website will receive an automatically generated “thank you for your comment” response indicating that the comment has been received and its content will be reviewed by the project team. Questions and comments will be aggregated by topic or theme and responded to on that basis. If appropriate, the topic will be added to the website list of Frequently Asked Questions.

People who leave comments via the website will automatically be added to the project database and will receive future communications about the project.

Comments received via the project’s Facebook page or other social media accounts will also be monitored, aggregated by topic or theme and responded to on that basis. Oral comments received at public meetings will be captured by project note-takers and put into a meeting summary. Written comment cards will also be collected at public meetings. These comment cards will be reviewed, aggregated and reported and archived similarly to those received via the website.

The project team and CTDOT will consider all public comments, both written and verbal, expressed during a public hearing, informational meeting, or other form of public engagement activity in the decision-making processes of the I-84 Danbury Project. The project team and CTDOT will review public comments to determine if a response is required. Following a public engagement event, a report of meeting or meeting minutes will be available to the public and posted on the project website and CTDOT’s Internet website. The project team and CTDOT will make, keep, and maintain a record of the proceedings of the meeting.

All questions and comments received and all responses provided by CTDOT throughout the course of the project will be archived for the public record.

3.0 EVALUATION OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT EFFECTIVENESS

The project team will periodically (twice annually) evaluate the effectiveness of the project's public involvement and outreach efforts. The project team will assess levels of overall public participation, attendance levels at live events, engagement of traditionally hard-to-reach groups, number of comments received, and the degree of misinformation or public confusion about project objectives or process and other metrics.

Performance metrics will focus on participant demographics and participant feedback collected at each public participation project. Performance assessments will reflect on outreach activities throughout the project, identifying practices or locations that were successful, and drawing conclusions for future outreach based on lessons learned. Specific attention will be given to the assessment of the effectiveness of outreach to Environmental Justice or Limited English Proficiency populations.

This assessment may lead to modification of:

- Public outreach meetings or events, such as reassessing:
 - Meeting formats
 - The number or frequency of public involvement opportunities
 - Meeting venues
- Website content and social media postings
- Project materials, such as:
 - Are they clear and understandable?
 - Do they provide opportunity for input or indicate that input is desired?
 - Do they help explain the process?
 - Are they well received?

4.0 SCHEDULE

The project team has developed a preliminary schedule for public involvement activities to: a) elicit timely and productive community dialog about transportation; b) to maintain public interest in addressing important transportation issues; c) to strategically bridge between the plan’s technical work and public needs, expectations or desires; and, d) to maximize benefits that can be achieved from interaction with the public. This schedule is available to the public on the project website and will be updated as required during the project.
